Educationally backward regions in the country

1509. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the Union Territories and States in the country considered educationally backward before the commencement of the Seventh Five Year Plan;

(b) the steps taken by Government to help such Union Territories| States for the removal of educational backwardness during the Seventh Five Year Plan and the success achieved in this regard so far; and

(c) the particulars of the areas in Punjab which have been covered under such a scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) The following nine States were categorised educationally backward by the Planning Commission Working Group on Elementary Education 1977, *viz.* Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

(b) During the first two years of the Seventh Five Year Plan *viz.* 1985-86 and 1986-87, the following three schemes are being implemented exclusively in the nine educationally backward States:—

(1) Non-Formal Education Programme for setting up and running NFE Centres.

(2) Appointment of women teachers in primary schools for increasing girls' enrolment; and

(3) Early childhood education for 3 to 6 age-group for setting up and running ECE Centres.

The Scheme of Non-formal Education has been expanded and improved. Arunachal Pradesh has been added as the 10th educationally backward States and the revised schemes also covers all the States and Union Territories in urban slums, hilly, desert and tribal areas, and areas with concentration of working children. Till date 909 NFE Projects have been sanctioned and grants released for operating 1,74,744 centres. Under the scheme of appointment of women teachers, grants were released for appointment of 8000 women teachers. Under the Early Childhood Education scheme, grants amounting to Rs. 337.99 lakhs have been released to voluntary agencies in the nine educationally backward States.

The Scheme of appointment women teachers has now been su sumed into the schemes of Operati Blackboard from 1987-88. T scheme of Operation Blackboard is applicable to all States and Union Territories and will help to bring all Primary Schools upto the minimum required standard which will in effect be a special assistance to backward areas.

(c) Punjab was not classified as an educationally backward State. No grants were released to that State under these schemes.

External (Assistance for Development of National Highways and State Highways

1510. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal